

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JOHANN 00762 011753Z

ACTION AF-08

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5835

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 0762

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EGEN, ELAB, EIND, SF

SUBJECT: AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AMCHAM) - DEVELOPMENTS

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

REFS: 1) JOHANNESBURG 2075; 2) STATE 290674; 3) STATE 066443

1. DR RONALD F. MULLER (REF THREE) MET WITH CONGEN OFFICERS AND GORDON PHELPS AND ALLAN MCCOMBER OF CITIBANK AMONG OTHERS. DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS MULLER RAISED QUESTION OF AMCHAM NOTING THAT, AMONG OTHER QUESTIONS, THIS WAS ONE IN WHICH HE CONSULTING WITH THE CLARKE SUB-COMMITTEE IN THE SENATE AND REFERRED TO THE MEETING CLARKE HAD IN NOVEMBER WITH FRIENDS OF USSALEP (SEE REFTEL ONE). HE ALSO NOTED THAT THIS IS A QUESTION HE DISCUSSING WITH THE NEW DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FRANK WEIL. PHELPS SAID THAT THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAD QUESTION UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION AND THAT, WHILE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION IN THE LOCAL US BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE GENERAL DIRECTION SEEMS TO BE TO GO AHEAD WITH AN AMCHAM DESPITE WHAT HE TERMED "THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE US GOVERNMENT".

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PAGE 02 JOHANN 00762 011753Z

2. MULLER ASKED WHY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY BELIEVED AN AMCHAM WAS NECESSARY. AMONG OTHER REASONS, PHELPS SAID THAT THERE WAS A STRONG VIEW - AND NOT JUST AMONG SMALL COMPANIES OR SALES COMPANIES BUT INCLUDING A NUMBER OF MANUFACTURERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS - THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY NEEDED A PLATFORM WHICH THEY COULD USE COLLECTIVELY TO

DISCUSS ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE WITH THE SAG INCLUDING THE TYPES OF GUIDELINES IN THE RECENTLY PUBLICISED SULLIVAN GUIDELINES MANIFESTO.

3. PRIOR TO LEAVING JOHANNESBURG AFTER HIS THREE DAY VISIT, MULLER INFORMED CONGEN THAT HE HAD HAD THE AMCHAM QUESTION RAISED OR COMMENTED ON WITH EVERY MEMBER OF THE MULTI-NATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY WITH WHOM HE HAD MET DURING HIS VISIT AND THAT HIS OVERALL IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAD THIS QUESTION UNDER VERY ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD TOUCH BASE IN STATE UPON HIS RETURN AND WOULD REVIEW THIS QUESTION, AMONG OTHERS.

4. ALE ANDER M. HENSHEL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BULOVA INFORMED CONGEN TODAY THAT AT FRIENDS OF USSALEP MEETING ON APRIL FIRST, THE AMCHAM QUESTION WILL BE A MAJOR TOPIC OF DISCUSSION. HE SAID THAT BASED ON FRIENDS MEETING IN EARLY MARCH, HAL SCHIMMELFENIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LILLY LABS (A MANUFACTURING COMPANY HERE), WAS GIVEN APPROVAL TO CIRCULATE A QUESTIONNAIRE TO ALL MEMBERS ON THE QUESTION OF AN AMCHAM AND THAT THIS WOULD BE AIRED ON APRIL FIRST. SHIMMELFENIG HAD ALSO TELEGRAPHED JOHN L. CALDWELL OF US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN WASHINGTON FOR AN UP-DATED READING ON THE OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT ATTITUDE TOWARD AN AMCHAM. HENSHEL SAID THAT CALDWELL'S REPLY WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ATTITUDE REMAINED "NEUTRAL" BUT COMMENTED THAT THIS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE NEGATIVE.

5. HENSHEL (AND PRYKE OF CHASE) HAVE PROMISED TO INFORM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 JOHANN 00762 011753Z

US DEVELOPMENTS AT FRIENDS MEETING ON APRIL FIRST WHICH WE WILL REPORT.
JOHNSON

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